

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** Providing early childhood education in public schools: Perceptions of elementary principals in Indiana

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As President Obama works through his second term, he has recently called on the country to embrace, promote, and extend the early childhood services for the majority of this country's four year-old children. This call to action has captured the attention of government officials, school officials, policy developers, and the community alike. The complexities of early childhood education for all four year olds is a tremendous challenge for all of those who embrace it and wish to implement it. This study investigated and described the challenges of servicing large populations in early childhood, the varied approaches of the past 40 years, the research-based results of such programming, and how the public school environment is the most likely placement for such a massive four year-old educational program. The public school principal was the primary focus of this investigation and identified the principals' of Indiana's elementary public schools perspective in relation to early childhood curriculum, instructional practices, and program supervision capacity. This investigation provides formative statistical data that hypothesized the fact that a principal's level of competency in early childhood is essential to achieving success when providing educational programming for four year-old children.